the Tao. The Tao, as they conceived it, may be defined as the way of the Universe. This they thought to be simplicity itself. Accordingly they wished to reduce government and economic organization to the minimum. To them the elaborate ceremonies and meticulous ethics of the Confucianists were anathema. Then there were the Mohists. Mo Ti, their founder, was intensely religious. He believed that T'ien or Shang Ti, the traditional Supreme God of his day, loved all men. All men, therefore, so he held, should love one another and should seek one another's welfare. He condemned aggressive war as contrary to love and held that costly funerals were wasteful of materials needed for the living and should be discouraged. His followers divided into two groups, one emphasizing his religious views and the other stressing his dialectic. A fourth main school, the Legalists, sought to create economically self-sufficient states under autocratic monarchs—each a centralized fighting machine in command of a ruler who strictly controlled his subjects under impartially administered law. In and out of these four schools a good deal of religious and metaphysical speculation went on, some of it marked by daring and acute scepticism and some of it by reasoned faith.

In the fifth century before the Christian era the wars between the states which made up the then China increased in intensity. Eventually, out of the sorrows of these years, in the middle of the third century B.C. a decisive transition occurred. The old order passed away and a new China emerged, more widely extended, but with a culture largely based on that of the past. Ch'in, with its seat in the valley of the Wei in the Northwest, conquered its rivals and founded the Chinese Empire. Its

great leader and autocrat, Shih Huang Ti, extended his rule over the major portion of what is now China proper, sought to stamp out the remnants of the Chou feudalism, and administered his realm through a centralized bureaucracy, which, under rulers and ministers who had adopted the Legalist theory, had been developed in his native state of Ch'in. To make his power secure, Shih Huang Ti endeavored to curb the non-Legalist philosophic schools which criticized the political theory and the attendant organization on which he depended.

The structure which Ch'in Shih Huang Ti had so triumphantly erected was disrupted shortly after his death. A successful war-